



## Talking Points

October 8, 2014

- There are no confirmed cases of Ebola Virus in Connecticut at this time. The Governor's Order for a Public Health Emergency Response (PHER) was issued as a precautionary matter.
- The order gives the commissioner of the Department of Public Health (DPH) the authority to quarantine and isolate an individual or a group of individuals whom the commissioner reasonably believes has been exposed to the Ebola virus or infected with the Ebola virus.
- The order was not executed because a specific case has been identified, but rather as a precautionary and preparatory measure in the event that the state has either a confirmed infection or has confirmed that someone at risk of developing the infection is residing in the state.
- It is better to have this authority in advance of an emergency, rather than having to implement it in the midst of one. This order makes sure we have the authorities in place that will allow us to move quickly to protect public health, if and when that becomes necessary.
- Without the declaration, there is no statewide ability to isolate or quarantine – instead, the authority rests with each individual local public health director.
- While local health officials are certainly on the front lines of this effort, at the ready to address any situation, having this order in place will allow us to have a more coordinated response in the event that someone in Connecticut either tests positive for Ebola or has been identified as someone who is at risk of developing it.
- We have no reason to believe that anyone in Connecticut is infected or at risk of infection, but if it does happen, we want to be ready
- Some states, such as NJ, MA, NH, and VT already have existing statutes which confer quarantine authority to the DPH Commissioner
- Isolation and Quarantine are important public health tools for controlling infectious disease outbreaks. Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease.
  - **Isolation** separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
  - **Quarantine** separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

### **Background**

- The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, affecting [multiple countries](#) in West Africa. Although the risk of an Ebola outbreak in the United States is very low, CDC and partners are taking precautions to prevent this from happening.
- On 9/30/2014, CDC confirmed, the [first travel-associated case of Ebola to be diagnosed in the United States](#).
- DPH has been closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and receiving guidance from the CDC. DPH has sent regular Ebola-related updates and guidance to medical professionals, local health directors, hospitals, and emergency medical services providers.
- DPH has asked Connecticut hospitals to ensure they can detect a patient with Ebola, protect healthcare workers so they can safely care for the patient, and respond in a coordinated fashion. Hospitals have been asked to complete a detailed checklist for Ebola preparedness and return it to DPH later this month.

### **BASICS FACTS ABOUT EBOLA:**

- Symptoms of Ebola virus disease (EVD) include: fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, and abnormal bleeding. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola virus though 8-10 days is most common.
- Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected symptomatic person or through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions.
- Individuals who are not symptomatic are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms or has died of the disease.
- There is no medicine to cure Ebola. Treatment typically includes treating the fever, keeping hydrated, and managing any other infections.

For the latest information on Ebola, please visit [www.cdc.gov/ebola](http://www.cdc.gov/ebola)